

# “Examined and Found Complete”

## 2 Corinthians Chapter 13

Paul had been summarizing his defense as an apostle against those “super apostles” who have come into Corinth and have criticized Paul’s authority. Paul had just completed his defense with a surprise twist. He said:

**2 Corinthians 12:19-21** “All this time you have been thinking that we are defending ourselves to you. Actually, it is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ; and all for your upbuilding, beloved. For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there will be strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances; I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced.”

You thought I was defending myself, but I was actually addressing issues in you. Paul wants the Corinthians to deal with problems and grow up. In this last chapter, Paul will call the Corinthians to walk the High Calling of their faith. It is time. They cannot put it off any longer. Deal with it NOW!

### 2Cr 13:1 1) Before I Come, Examine Yourself vs 1-5

**This is the third time I am coming to you. EVERY FACT IS TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES.**

- Paul is again announcing he is coming for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time. (2 Corinthians 12:15)
  - He came to Corinth originally, founded the church and stayed 1 ½ years.
  - He came a second time very briefly between the writings of 1 and 2 Corinthians. (this is not mentioned in the book of Acts but implied in the letters)
- Because of his 2 previous visits, and his plan of coming a 3<sup>rd</sup> time He quotes Deuteronomy 17:6.
- Deuteronomy 17:6-7 “you shall bring out that man or that woman who has done this evil deed to your gates, that is, the man or the woman, and you shall stone them to death. On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness. The hand of the witnesses shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.”
  - Two Witnesses at a minimum. Not just one.
  - The Witnesses will cast the first stone. This deterred error and accusations from jealousy.
- Paul first demonstrates that he is following a Scriptural Principal of proof of guilt. 3 witnesses. Paul does not come to conclusions and judgments based upon gossip or hearsay. He takes the time to know for certainty what the real issues are. (even if he is misjudged for it)
- Paul secondly is announcing that the 3<sup>rd</sup> witness brings judgment. This is more grace than most of us give. We hear of an offense the first time and we judge. Paul waits for a third witness. And not only that but he tells them he is coming to witness for a third time. He is giving them warning to straighten up of judgment will follow.

2Cr 13:2 I have previously said when present the second time, and though now absent I say in advance to those who have sinned in the past and to all the rest *as well*, that if I come again I will not spare *anyone*,

2Cr 13:3 since you are seeking for proof of the Christ who speaks in me, and who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you.

- The Corinthians were unimpressed with Paul’s gentleness of Christ. They compared him to the false “super apostles” who dominated them. (2 Corinthians 11:5 + 12:11)
- “You are seeking for proof of the Christ who speaks in me” - Paul says you are looking for a stronger example of Christ in your leader, you will find it when I come again.
- Just like Jesus who came and dwelt with man the first time. He was gentle and meek. But when He returns He will have fire in His eyes, a sword in His hands and He will judge the living and the dead.

2Cr 13:4 For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, yet we will live with Him because of the power of God *directed* toward you.

- You make a mistake in believing that the meekness of Jesus 1<sup>st</sup> visit means that He does not judge.
- You make a mistake in thinking the gentleness of Paul in previous visits means he cannot be stern.

2Cr 13:5 Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?

- EXAMINE YOURSELVES. - the Corinthians have spent their time examining Paul to the “super apostles” We have seen in the letter of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians they compared themselves against themselves. But they HAVE NOT EXAMINED THEMSELVES.
- What are they to examine?
  - If they are in the faith.
    - 1) Paul realizes that the church is an open organization. All sorts of people are free to enter, mingle, leave and come again. All sorts of people can say they are part of the church. But not all who do are Christian.
    - 2) People outside the church sometimes judge the church for the example demonstrated by those who claim to be a part and are not Christian.
    - 3) Periodically we need to EXAMINE OURSELVES to see if we are in the faith.
  - If Jesus Christ is within them
    - 1) It isn't to see if we are performing well. But that if Jesus Christ is the center of our being. His life for our life. Lack of performance is a symptom of not having Jesus as our life.
    - 2) Again people outside the church think that it is about going to church or reading the Bible or praying. It is about Christ in us verses our own self regard being our center.
- Psalm 26:1-3 “Vindicate me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity, And I have trusted in the LORD without wavering. Examine me, O LORD, and try me; Test my mind and my heart. For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, And I have walked in Your truth.”
- Failing the test is NOT a focus on sin. It is a failure of not having the Lord Jesus Christ as the core of your being.

2Cr 13:6 But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test.

- Paul anticipates the Corinthians question. “Paul, have you examined yourself?” Sure he has. He quickly dismisses this with what he knows is the truth. They too once examined themselves and seen Jesus Christ they will easily see Christ in others (Paul) as well.

2Cr 13:7 2) Regardless of Others, You be Perfect vs 6-10

Now we pray to God that you do no wrong; not that we ourselves may appear approved, but that you may do what is right, even though we may appear unapproved.

2Cr 13:8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but *only* for the truth.

- Paul's chief concern is for the Corinthians to examine themselves and be found approved.
- Paul does not concern himself with his approval rating. He is telling them that even if you think I am not an apostle, you need to do what is right.
- We are a people of excuses. We use of failure of others to justify our failure. Paul is saying no matter what you think of others, No matter what others have done you are responsible for you.
- Once a lady in a church corrected a couple of teens who were dating and sitting listening to the preacher and they were holding hands and occasionally whisper to each other during the message. I'm not sure what the lady said, if she was right or wrong or if it was any of her business. But the response of the teens was tragic. They left the church and to this day they are not involved in a church.
  - Just like school, work, the football stadium there are knuckleheads out there. I know. I'm one of them.
  - Our response to Jesus Christ is about who HE is. Not who His followers are. Praise God for that. For if it was not so the church would not exist.

2Cr 13:9 For we rejoice when we ourselves are weak but you are strong; this we also pray for, that you be made complete.

2Cr 13:10 For this reason I am writing these things while absent, so that when present I *need* not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.

- Paul is praying for the Corinthians that they would be strong despite the weakness of others.
- Paul wants them complete. Not partially a Christian. You cannot be sort of pregnant. Either you are or you are not. A half built house is not a house. A half a Christian is not really a Christian at all.
- Paul writes this while absent so the Corinthians have time to repent before he comes.

2Cr 13:11 **3) Hugs and Kisses** vs 11-14

Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

- Paul closes this letter with what he hopes for believers.
  - 1) That They Would Rejoice - That their focus would be to bring praise to God. That Rejoice - a shout of gladness would be on their lips.
  - 2) That They Would be Complete - this has been translated as "be mature; aim for perfection; complete; mend you ways; aim for restoration) The Greek '*katartizo*' means to repair to perfection. PERFECTION is the standard. This doesn't allow for
  - 3) That They Would Know Comfort - knowing that there is no more division between you and The God who judges.
  - 4) That They Would Be In Unity - being like minded, preferring one another over oneself
  - 5) That They Would Have Peace - between one another
    - It is a choice for the believer to live this way. Paul did not tell them to allow the Lord to work this in them. It was a work they themselves need to put effort into.
    - Paul doesn't leave room for the believer to say "I'm just weak in this area" or "I'm not really wired that way"
- There is a reward for the believer living in this manner:  
THE GOD OF LOVE AND PEACE WILL BE WITH YOU.

2Cr 13:12 **Greet one another with a holy kiss.**

- Paul wants believers to be warm and loving with each other.
- Being a "holy" kiss removes any sense of romantic or erotic overtones.

2Cr 13:13 **All the saints greet you.**

2Cr 13:14 **The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.**

- There is no greater measure of being complete than the presence of the Triune God.
  - Grace of Jesus
  - Love of God
  - Fellowship (presence) of the Holy Spirit

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